

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

famished in Thy sweetness; sweet Thou art, without any bitterness.

" O eternal Trinity, in Thy light which Thou didst give me, receiving it with the light of most holy faith, I have known (for Thou makest it plain to me by many and wondrous revelations) the way of great perfection, in order that I may serve Thee with light and not with darkness ; that I may be a mirror of good and holy life, and thus rise up from my own miserable life ; for, through my sins, I have ever served Thee in darkness ; I have not known Thy truth, and, therefore, have not loved it Why did I not know Thee ? Because I did not see Thee with the glorious light of most holy faith, for the cloud of self-love darkened the eye of my understanding; and Thou, eternal Trinity, with Thy light didst dissolve that darkness. And who shall reach Thy height, to render Thee thanks for so measureless a gift, and such great benefits as Thou hast granted me, the doctrine of truth which Thou hast given me, which is a special grace beyond the general grace which Thou dost give to other creatures ¹ Thou wishest to condescend to my necessity, and to that of other creatures who will look into it as into a mirror. Do Thou, Lord, answer for me ; Thou Thyself hast given, do Thou Thyself answer and make satisfaction, infusing a light of grace into me, in order that with that light I may give Thee thanks. Robe, robe me with Thyself, eternal Truth, so that I may run this mortal life with true obedience and with th(light of most holy faith, with which light it seemeth that Thou dost inebriate my soul anew."¹

At the end of one of her longest letters to Fra Raimondo the letter that reads almost like a first sketch of the *Dialogo*, and contains the vision which was to be the starting-point of the book, Catherine claims to have learnt to write by a miracle, the power having suddenly come to her by a kind of spiritual intuition, while staying at the Rocca d' Orcia in the autumn of 1377 " This letter," she says, " and another that I sent you, I hav

¹ Cap. 167, corrected by the Vatican MS., *Cod. Sari. Lot.* 4063, with which Fra Raimondo substantially agrees.